

The Lexical and Pragmatic Effects of the Balinese Morpheme –ang

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Abstract

This paper addresses the morphosyntax of Balinese. One of the aims of this paper is to explain the functions of the suffix –ang, one of the robustly used morphemes in Balinese. The morpheme –ang is found in different types of sentence constructions, including causatives and applicatives, i.e. benefactive, verb-of-communication, instrumental, and Goal-PP constructions. An example of a non-applicative construction (without –ang) and an applicative construction (with –ang) are shown in examples (1a) and (1b) respectively.

1. a. I mémé ngidih tulang (baanga **kuluk**).
DET mother AV.ask for bone for dog
“Mother asked for bones (for a dog).”
- b. I mémé ngidih-**ang kuluk-é** tulang.
DET mother AV.ask for-APPL dog.DEF bone
“Mother asked for bones for the dog.”

As can be seen in the examples, although they have different structure, both non-applicative and applicative sentences (1a and 1b) are similar in meaning, the action is carried out by the Agent (i.e. mother) for the Beneficiary (i.e. a/the dog). The difference between these two sentences is the definite marker attached to the Beneficiary in (1b). As a peripheral participant in the non-applicative sentence, the beneficiary can be indefinite. However, when the beneficiary occupies the direct object position, it becomes a definite noun phrase. Therefore, the second aim of this paper is to explain the motivation for the occurrence of the morpheme –ang in the discourse. The distribution of –ang in discourse parallels what Donohue (2001) identified for *Tukang Besi*, in which applicative constructions are preferred when the newly introduced argument (e.g. *kuluké* ‘the dog’) is important to the discussion or the story, what is referred to as *discourse prominent*. Inspired by Davies’ (2005, 2013) work on Madurese applicative morphemes, I propose that the applied argument has a specificity requirement, which is true of discourse prominent element and which thus explains the motivation behind the coding of the applicative morpheme in Balinese.

To support this hypothesis, I tested the specificity of the applied argument by replacing it with a *wh*-word. *Wh*-words are considered to be non-specific as they do not have a referent known by the speaker. In a non-applicative construction (2), we can see that the beneficiary can be questioned with *wh*-in situ.

2. Iluh nyakan nasi baanga *nyen*?
Iluh AV.cook rice for who
‘Who did Iluh cook the rice for?’

However, *wh*-questions show that the beneficiary in constructions with *-ang* is required to be specific, because *wh*-in-situ is rendered ungrammatical (3a), and the applied argument can only be questioned through a clefting strategy (3b), which renders it specific.

3. a. * *Iluh nyakan-ang nyen nasi?*
Iluh AV.cook-APPL who rice
'Who did Iluh cook the rice for?'
- b. *Nyen ané jakan-ang-a nasi taken Iluh?*
Who REL cook-APPL-PV rice by Iluh
'Who did Iluh cook the rice for?'

As shown above, this evidence of specificity explains why the applicative morpheme is mainly used when the applied object is highly prominent in the discourse, as observed by Donohue in *Tukang Besi* applicative constructions. I will also show that the same result of the *wh*-test also applies in causative and other applicative constructions.